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Editor
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INTERVIEW

A CANDID CONVERSATION WITH A PROMINENT

SASQUATCH FIELD WORKER WHO SAYS EXACTLY WHAT HE THINKS



DANIEL SHEPPARD

Rene Dahinden

*Rene Dahinden, a resident of British Columbia, Canada, has been a leading Sasquatch investigator since the 1950's. He is the coauthor of *Sasquatch (New American Library, 1978)*. He was interviewed by Newsletter Editor J. Richard Greenwell. The opinions he expresses below are his own, and do not reflect any positions or policies of the International Society of Cryptozoology.*

Greenwell: You've been studying the whole problem of Sasquatch or Bigfoot since 1956. You've had a lot of information come your way, you've seen it all and heard it all, right?

Dahinden: Close to it.

Greenwell: What's your perception, after all these years, as to where Sasquatch research—if one can call it that—stands today? Where are we at?

Dahinden: I think that we need to proceed by stages: one, two, three, four. I think we're past the first stage, which is consideration of the historical evidence found in old newspapers, journals, totem poles, Indian legends, and oral tradition. First, we had to determine if there were, in fact, historical references to Sasquatch. We're now at stage two, which involves present-day eyewitness reports, footprints, the Patterson movie, and so forth. We can dissect this stage a little, and address eyewitness reliability, and so forth. Stage three involves getting actual physical evidence.

Greenwell: And how do you propose to go about getting that?

Dahinden: Well, we either wait for a hunter to pop one off, or a truck driver or somebody to run over one, and then have the nerve to step out and pick it up, or we go out ourselves and try to find a dead one or collect a live one.

Greenwell: So it really boils down to a statistical problem; that is, what is the probability, after so many years, with X number of people in the field, hunters and so on, that one would not have been shot or hit by a car? And how long can that last? And also, doesn't that sort of look bad for the case for Sasquatch?

Dahinden: Well, the only argument against the existence of Sasquatch, in my view, is how come one of them hasn't been collected, especially by somebody shooting it? Hunters and so on. Well, I have an argument against that: the emotional

shock of seeing something like that could stop a man from actually shooting. I've said often enough that, among the so-called Bigfoot hunters, they go either one way or the other: they flipflop completely on the side that the creature exists, they get to be believers because, either through emotional commitment or by looking at all the eyewitness accounts and other evidence, they come to the conclusion that it exists.

From then on, they have no doubt that any report coming their way is another piece of evidence. They become believers, and they become very gullible, to put it bluntly. They accept anything, either because they are unable to evaluate it, or because they don't want to, because they either want to stick it in a book, or they just like to collect reports. Over the years, I've been going in the opposite direction. I'm getting more cynical and ruthless as time passes, for the very simple reason that, if the damn thing exists, how come in all these years we really have not produced more evidence?

Greenwell: If you had to assign a probability to a large unknown species, a primate species, surviving like this in North America, what would your probability be? More or less than 50 percent?

Dahinden: I would say, looking at all my own personal experiences, all the eyewitnesses I've talked to, the footprints I've seen, the Patterson film I investigated, taking everything into consideration, I would say that such animals exist. I have never heard a damn argument, which was based on anything sound, that would indicate to me that Sasquatch does not exist. Some jokers say everybody who claims to see a Sasquatch is a nut, a mental case, he saw a bear or had an hallucination, without, of course, meeting the witness; that the footprints

were all faked--of course, they never show how they could be faked in such a realistic manner. I'm not talking about a small number of footprints. I'm

talking about hundreds of them. All in a line, straight, where you can see all kinds of variations and toe positions and everything else. Then you have the Patterson film. Nobody has ever shown me how it was faked. I know all about that film. I know as much as Patterson did, except, of course, I don't know for sure if it is real.

Greenwell: So you would assign it a probability of higher than 50 percent?

Dahinden: Everything points to the thing existing.

Greenwell: Now, having said that, let me ask you another question. Why is it, in your opinion, and there may be more than one reason, why is it that scientists, primarily physical anthropologists and primatologists, of which there are hundreds in this country and Canada, have generally ignored this topic? If this primate does exist, and it's right here under their noses, why have they ignored the reports and studied things in other countries instead?

Dahinden: I think it's fear. Concern for your own reputations, fear for their jobs. Why stick your fingers in a buzz saw when you can make a living without sticking your fingers in there, safe and sound?

Greenwell: That's a pretty strong professional condemnation of physical anthropologists. It's really accusing them of not meeting their professional responsibilities.

Dahinden: But these people can say, "Look, you bring me one and then it's my job. In the meantime, I'm not in the business of solving mysteries."

Greenwell: And that's exactly what many of them say. Do you think that's unprofessional, when they say that?

Dahinden: Well, it's being cautious. When I was a little younger, I was very hostile towards them. As far as I was concerned, they were just a bunch of clowns. Today, I understand things a little more, but I still think these people are nuts! For the very simple reason that, if this creature exists, and if it is found and they were involved, then they would make their names in history. So they're standing there being told that this thing exists, maybe not understanding what they are being told. Anybody with any ounce of brains who wants to advance professionally and get recognition and everything, there it is.

Greenwell: But it's still a risk.

Dahinden: Well, as I get older, I can understand their position. It's a very, very complex situation, and maybe these people just think it's too risky to be involved in.

Greenwell: Now, let me ask you this. If somehow you became aware of, or got custody of, physical evidence--say a hunter shot one, and he had read your book and he called you up and said, "Well, it's all over; here it is, I've got it!"--and you verified that, what would you do? What would be the first thing you would do? Who would you call?

Dahinden: If somebody shot one, and I was the first one there, I would sign him up. Airtight.

Greenwell: You would what?

Dahinden: Sign him up. I would be his agent.

Greenwell: But I mean what would you do as far as announcing--

Dahinden: I'll tell you exactly what I'd do. I've given this a lot of thought. I don't run out in the bush without my own little plans. I've taken lots of ---- from every damn ----- in the country. Even when they couldn't spell Bigfoot they were experts. I would conceal the evidence. I would take a lot of pictures, and I would conceal the evidence. And then I would hold a press conference. And I would announce that I had a Sasquatch. In the flesh. And that it will be sold to the highest bidder. I know what I would want, and I would say either I get it or the evidence is going to lay out there and rot away, and I wouldn't move a finger. I don't give a damn about science. I couldn't care less about science. I don't give a damn about advancing human knowledge or anything else whatsoever. I couldn't care less. The day scientists care about me, then I might change my mind. In the meantime, it's Dahinden. And nobody else.

Greenwell: So you would want to make a deal. What sort of deal?

Dahinden: I'd sell it to the highest bidder. And then I'd take the scientists by the scruff of their collective neck and rub their goddamn faces in--actually, I would like to see all the people--the scientists--who have opened their mouths and made their stupid, ignorant statements, fired from their jobs. Not because they did not believe in Sasquatch--that has nothing to do with it--but because they were totally unscientific, knew nothing of what they talked about, but more important, had closed minds and open mouths. They used their positions and their titles to just yap. And for this I think they should be fired. It's my view that, if you yap once, you yap all the time about things you know nothing about. And that's why they should be removed. Guys like -----, guys like ----- in the Museum

of -----. They should be totally, absolutely, right then and there, without pension, without anything, just taken and thrown out the front door. Then and there.

If this thing is found, there should be a complete and total change in the attitudes of scientific institutions. If this thing exists, and it was here all along, and we tried to cram it down their throats and show them that there's something there, and they couldn't see it.... I mean, what the hell else could it have been? This thing is an animal which feeds, which reproduces, which leaves tracks. It can be tracked, it can be studied. It's nothing strange. It's just another animal. And this is what kind of gets to me. On the other hand, sometimes I'm glad they're stupid. Otherwise, there would be no place for the yahoos like me, right?

Greenwell: What sort of role do you see the International Society of Cryptozoology playing? How can we help with this problem?

Dahinden: I think that there's a forum here, where you can publish material. If it is done properly, you will get lots of interest. Let me say this, that this organization could be the clearinghouse for such information around the world.

Greenwell: Do you think that we can better inform the scientists on this topic? We're trying to reach the scientists. Do you think that can be done?

Dahinden: Yes, I think you can do it. You can publish articles, but they have to be factual. You must be sure that the Society isn't used by people who are freaks. I'm not talking about opinions. We can argue about opinions as long as the facts are there. But a lot of freaks have been producing garbage. Your publication should

be hard-hitting and factual, willing to expose some of these things. But don't reject a person because he doesn't have a doctorate. Reject him because he isn't factual. Or he tries so damn hard to prove something and he just doesn't do it properly, or he uses every lever he can to prove his point when it just doesn't make sense any more. Publish material that makes sense.

Greenwell: Are you still encouraged, then, enthusiastic, after all these years, about solving the problem, cracking the case?

Dahinden: Oh, yes. Look, I originally gave this a long, cold, hard look. Where I come from, when you start something, you finish it.

Greenwell: Where do you come from?

Dahinden: Switzerland. You know, I come from a part of Switzerland where, when you start something, you finish it. And anybody who stands in your way, or the scientist who doesn't want to go any way, you just wave good-bye to him. I can quit any day of the week. I could stop right now. I could say "---- it all," and just walk away. But where would I find an interest in life like this? All the people I meet, all the different situations I get into. It doesn't mean anything to my ego, but it has broadened my outlook on life.

Greenwell: You must find it exciting, this search. Although you say you don't give a damn about science, it seems that there is a burning curiosity motivating you.

Dahinden: Look, I heard about Sasquatch, I was told it was there, so I thought I'd go and get one. Grab him by the ass and bring him home to mother. Well, that was almost 30 years ago. I didn't know who was

telling the truth or who wasn't. Then you collect all this stuff. It was hard to pinpoint what made a sighting good, and what made a witness bad.

There's a mystery to be solved, and I want to help solve it. Let me put it this way. It's not the money as such. I don't walk around with dollar signs in my eyes. I'm speaking of money as a weapon, maybe, because when you have money it opens more doors. Then, you want to know if you are right, and of course I want to be the one who gets it.

You go through various stages in this business. First there was a sense of adventure. Then it got some publicity. Looking back on it, maybe that kind of

fueled it a little. Then a certain stubbornness, expectations of a quick glory--I still remember that 1959-1960 Slick expedition, when we thought one of them would be popping from behind a tree any minute. I kept a shell in my gun all the time! Then you kind of get that knocked out of you, and then it's up and down, promises of support which never come, and this and that. So you get yo-yo'd up and down. Finally, I think you get to the point where I am today, where you reach a certain stage where you are an expert. I hate like hell to say that, but it's true. Because you have been at it longer, because you know more. Not because the others are stupid. I think the stage I'm in now is just a dull, unexciting, steady

search--it might not sound like it. You went up and down, and now you are just on a steady line, just constantly pushing, just going down this road without really getting emotional. You sometimes get excited a little bit, but not like it was at one time.

Greenwell: Do you see younger people going through those same stages today?

Dahinden: Yes.

Greenwell: Don't you sometimes miss those earlier days, though?

Dahinden: That's just like young people asking you, "Wouldn't you like to be young again?" Would you? Go through all that horse---- again? □

CSICOP PUBLISHES FURTHER NESSIE CRITICISMS

The Winter, 1984, Newsletter (Vol. 3, No. 4), discussed allegations in the September, 1984, issue of Discover magazine claiming that the famous 1972 Nessie flipper photo had been "retouched" by the Academy of Applied Science (AAS) subsequent to its computer enhancement at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL).

Because of the seriousness of the allegations, which implied outright fraud on the part of AAS President Robert H. Rines and/or his associates, the Editor agreed to publish--in the same issue--a statement by the Academy, most of which was taken up by Academy member Charles W. Wyckoff's response to Discover, but which that magazine had refused to publish.

The Discover allegations were based on information provided by two electronics engineers, Rikki Razdan and Alan Kielar, who had unsuccessfully tried to obtain evidence of Nessie during an extensive 1983 expedition. Razdan and Kielar published their own article soon afterwards, in

the Winter, 1984-85 issue (Vol. IX, No. 2) of The Skeptical Inquirer, which is issued quarterly by the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP), a nationwide group which monitors and debunks paranormal and anomalous claims, from phony health cures to astrology.

In this article, entitled "Sonar and Photographic Searches for the Loch Ness Monster: A Reassessment," Razdan and Kielar describe the engineering aspects of their own equipment, although they seem unacquainted with the fundamentals of limnology or ecology--even referring to the loch's "marine life." Their equipment--a floating array of 144 sonar transducers and nine automatic, underwater biopsy dart guns--was in operation between July 25 and September 16, 1983. Any target moving under their platform would automatically be tracked three-dimensionally. The system was set up to ignore fish and fish schools. The authors state that "during that time it [the system]

recorded nothing larger than a 1-meter fish."

After dismissing the findings of previous expeditions (Cambridge and Birmingham universities, the now-defunct Loch Ness Investigation Bureau, and the currently operating Loch Ness and Morar Project directed by Adrian Shine), Razdan and Kielar concentrate on the findings of AAS. They state, among other things, that "the transducer unit was not secured to the Loch's bottom [the night of the flipper photography], as shown in the illustrations in most books and publications, but was free-swinging. Nowhere in these sonar traces can the camera-strobe unit or its umbilical cable be seen as they would have been if the published illustrations had been accurate. With the camera and sonar units deployed in this manner, it would have been impossible for Rines to make any rational correlation between any underwater photographs and the sonar traces."

The authors then discuss the flipper photos themselves, stat-

ing that they had compared the originals (given to them in Scotland) with the electronically enhanced versions (given to them by Alan Gillespie at JPL), and these with the final versions published by AAS. Unlike the Discover editors, Razdan and Kielar do not talk of "retouching," but state: "...we discovered that, prior to publication, areas of these enhanced photographs had been significantly altered to give the impression of the flipperlike objects that appear in the published version." No further details are provided.

The authors then go on to dismiss the AAS 1976 "head" and "body" underwater photos "as debris on the loch bottom or side walls," and conclude that "the evidence so far advanced strongly suggests that the Loch Ness Monster is nothing more than a long-lived and extremely entertaining legend."

Rines and his AAS associates, Harold Edgerton, Charles Wyckoff, Martin Klein, Robert

Needleman, and Howard Curtis, responded to Razdan and Kielar in the Summer, 1985, Skeptical Inquirer (Vol. IX, No. 4). Among other things, they stated: "...The further fact is that while there were floating experiments during the several successive evenings of the expedition, from at least 1:00 to 2:00 a.m. on August 8, 1972, the two boats were held in position in flat calm by the respective camera-strobe on a metal stand lowered to the bottom, and the outwardly pointed sonar transducer lashed to a cinder block, then also lowered to the bottom at least 10 feet higher up on the ridge than the camera strobe."

The AAS group then goes on to explain a number of other technical problems raised by Razdan and Kielar, defending their position point by point. Immediately following this response, the Skeptical Inquirer ran a reply by Razdan and Kielar, who again assert that "the computer-enhanced 'flipper' photographs were significantly altered in a

subjective manner prior to publication," and that "Academy experiments were not adequately or accurately described in papers subsequently published by the investigators."

Razdan and Kielar then quote from a book by Nicholas Witchell (The Loch Ness Story, Terrance Dalton, Lavenham, Suffolk, England, 1976), to support their contention that the sonar transducer could not have been fixed to the bottom the night of August 8, 1972, and proceed to dispute technical points defended by the AAS group. They concluded by stating: "Our findings raise serious questions about the validity of Academy members' publications on Loch Ness, and Rines' response does nothing to clarify or resolve the discrepancies we have pointed out." □

This newsletter also contains a new communication from Razdan and Kielar responding to the AAS Statement published in the Winter, 1984, issue; see Cryptoleters.--Editor

ISC BOARD MEETS IN SAN DIEGO

The Board of Directors of the Society met on May 24, 1985, the day before the Annual Membership Meeting (see separate article, this issue) to discuss past and anticipated progress of the Society.

The meeting, which was held in the Board Room of Hubbs Marine Research Institute (formerly the Hubbs-Seaworld Research Institute), the host institution, was attended by Forrest Wood, who chaired; Grover Krantz; ISC Vice President Roy Mackal; and ISC Secretary Richard Greenwell. Ned Winn, ISC Secretary for Europe, also attended as a nonvoting participant. As the first years following the establishment of the Society go by, there are fewer critical items to be discussed and voted on.

On this occasion, the Board once again expressed its approval of the content and format of both the newsletter and journal, but expressed concern over the continued tardiness of their publication--due, principally, to cash flow problems. The Society's paid membership was put at 650, with about 200 who had not yet renewed from the 1984 membership period, and about 300 who had not renewed from the 1982-1983 membership periods. Had all members renewed, the total paid membership would stand at about 1,150, more than sufficient to cover all operating and publishing expenses. It was agreed to send new reminders to these "dropout" members.

Dr. Winn reported on his duties as European Secretary of

the Society. Besides Europe, Dr. Winn is responsible for North Africa and the Middle East. Members in these areas may renew or order back publications through his European Secretariat near Geneva. The Board will meet again at the University of Chicago on June 13, 1986. □

"The real scientist...is ready to bear privations and, if need be, starvation rather than let anyone dictate to him which direction his work must take."

Albert Szent-Gyorgyi
Science Needs Freedom, 1943.

"I would trust Shakespeare, but I would not trust a committee of Shakespeares."

William Bateson
in Biology and the Social Crisis
(by J. K. Brierley)
Heinemann, London, 1967

SAN DIEGO MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Society's third Membership Meeting was held in San Diego, California, on Saturday, May 25, and was attended by about 60 members from the Southern California area. Both the Board of Directors Meeting on the preceding day, May 24, and the Membership Meeting were hosted by the Hubbs Marine Research Institute (formerly the Hubbs-Seaworld Research Institute), located in the Seaworld complex by Mission Bay. The Membership Meeting was held in the Atlantis Restaurant, a Seaworld-owned facility, and was chaired by Forrest Wood, an ISC board member and marine mammalogist at the nearby U.S. Naval Ocean Systems Center.

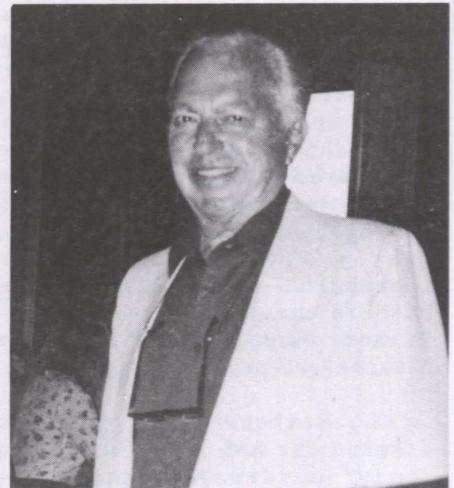
The program began at 11 a.m. with an informal reunion, at which wine was served, followed by lunch. The afternoon session began with a welcoming address by William Evans, Director of the Institute and a Charter Member of the Society. Dr. Evans expressed his delight at having his Institute host the 1985 ISC meetings.

This was followed by the first presentation given by ISC Secretary Richard Greenwell, who spoke on "A Proposed Classifica-

tion System for Cryptozoology." Mr. Greenwell stated that one of the problems confronting cryptozoology is that it has lacked a cohesive framework within which to organize and analyze its data. He presented a classificatory scheme involving seven categories, based on the nature of the evidence involved. Each category was illustrated by examples of historical precedents and current claims. Mr. Greenwell stated that the proposed framework would reduce subjectivity and improve communications with critics, as it would define precisely what was being argued about. He stated that, after undergoing review and criticism by others, the proposed classification system would be submitted for publication.

Mr. Wood spoke next on "The Historical Background of the Giant Octopus," and discussed his resuscitation of the St. Augustine, Florida, case in recent decades, and the analysis performed by his associate Joe Gennaro at New York University. Gennaro, a cell biologist (and now also an ISC Board member), concluded that tissue from the large St. Augustine organic mass—which had been preserved since 1896 at the U.S. National Museum, was more octopus-like than squid-like or whale-like. Mr. Wood also related how, in the 1950's, he had heard reports from Caribbean fishermen of what he now believes probably represented giant octopuses, at least 50 feet—and maybe 100 feet or more—from tentacle tip to tentacle tip (the largest octopuses conclusively known to science have a radial spread of a little over 20 feet). Mr. Wood highlighted his illustrated talk with a discussion of octopus physiology and behavior.

The next presentation was by ISC Vice President Roy Mackal,



Chairman Forrest Wood relaxing between sessions.

who spoke on "Histological and Amino Acid Analysis of the Giant Octopus Tissue." Dr. Mackal has continued to work with Dr. Gennaro to further demonstrate the probability of the octopus origin of the St. Augustine tissue. He explained that they had conducted histological and amino acid analyses on the tissue, as well as on a number of control tissues from octopus, squid, and dolphin. Micrographs of tissue samples made with dark field polarized light illumination established that the St. Augustine tissue was most like that of octopus tissue. Dr. Mackal stated that he would continue with this work, which will eventually be submitted for publication in Cryptozoology. He also revealed that new and detailed information had reached him concerning a supposed giant octopus which had been disrupting deep sea crab and shrimp fishing operations off the coast of Bermuda. (These recent events will be described in the next newsletter.)

The final presentation was by Tom Williams, who discussed "The Ri Unmasked: A Lesson for Cryptozoology." Mr. Williams was a



William Evans, Director of the Hubbs Marine Research Institute, welcoming ISC members to the 1985 annual meeting.

member of the February, 1985, expedition which determined that the marine animal known to New Irelanders as the Ri or Ilkai was, in fact, the Indo-Pacific dugong (see Newsletter, Spring, 1985). Mr. Williams showed slides of the expedition, and related the highlights of the discovery, which essentially "closed the file" on one cryptozoological case. Mr. Williams, who has submitted a formal expedition Field Report for publication in Cryptozoology, emphasized how new dugong behaviors have been uncovered through cryptozoological fieldwork. Previous average dive times for dugongs in the scientific literature were about 1 minute, which has now been increased to 10 minutes in deeper water (30-50

feet), and this information will be of great interest to dugong researchers.

The Meeting culminated with a general discussion among the members present on the future of cryptozoology, and the role which the Society could play. The only disappointment which detracted from the success of the meeting was the absence of ISC President Bernard Heuvelmans, who was originally scheduled as a speaker, but was then unable to attend.

The 1986 Membership Meeting is now scheduled for June 14 at the University of Chicago (see separate article, this issue). All ISC members in the area are encouraged to attend. □



Tom Williams discussing the 1985 expedition which uncovered the identity of the Ri.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Once again, we must apologize to the membership for the long delay in producing the current newsletter--this time longer than usual. The Society experienced a serious cash flow problem during 1985, resulting, again, from the necessity of having to pay off the expenses involved in publishing the journal for the previous year.

We are pleased to report that not only has the 1984 journal been fully paid for, but production of the 1985 issue is proceeding, and the journal is scheduled to be mailed in March, 1986. Furthermore, steps have been taken to increase significantly the number of institutional subscribers to the Society's publications, which, in turn, should help liquidate more quickly the publishing costs of this new issue, thus avoiding a repetition of the cash flow problem in 1986. The Society has suffered a continual cash flow problem since its founding in 1982, when its initial capitalization was \$180. We regret the publication delays, but members may rest assured that they

will eventually receive all the publications to which their 1985 membership entitles them.

The two remaining 1985 newsletters are now in production, and should be mailed within 30 days and 60 days respectively after the mailing of the present issue. Both the last 1985 newsletter (Winter) and the 1985 journal will contain return envelopes which members are requested to use for their 1986 membership renewals.

Production plans are also under way for the 1986 publications. The Spring newsletter will necessarily be late, because of the tardiness of the 1985 issues, and will probably not appear until June. The other three issues will then be brought out in the 2-month intervals, in August, October, and December, and the 1986 journal is scheduled for a November publication.

Furthermore, to permanently avoid the journal actually appearing in the year following that appearing on its cover (as

has continually happened since the first issue in 1982), starting with the 1987 issue--provided funds are available--the journal will be brought out during the spring of its corresponding year, instead of Autumn/Winter, which has invariably resulted in the "wrong year" appearance. Shifting publication forward from late in the year to early in the year will involve a considerably increased editorial workload over the next year, but we will do our utmost to meet the planned deadlines.

The support of the Sustaining Members and Benefactors has continued to provide the necessary "survival" funds for the Society, which receives absolutely no financial support from other sources except its members and institutional subscribers. Donations over and above the required \$25 annual membership fee may be made at the time of renewal or at any other time of the year. Such persons--who automatically become Sustaining Members--may deduct the contributed amounts from their federal taxes if they reside in the USA.

J. Richard Greenwell
Editor

MEMBERSHIP MEETING FOR 1986 SET

The ISC Annual Membership Meeting for 1986 has been scheduled for June 14 in Chicago, Illinois. The Society has held such meetings on the East and West coasts and in Europe (New York, San Diego, and Paris respectively), but never in the U.S. Midwest, where ISC has many members. The Membership Meeting, which will follow the Board of Directors Meeting on June 13, will be held in the Dora DeLee Room of Billings Hospital, The University of Chicago. Both meetings will be officially hosted by the University's Department of Biology. Lee M. Van Valen, a paleobiologist in the Department and an ISC Board member, will chair the meetings, but the Membership Meeting will be organized by ISC Vice President Roy Mackal.

A detailed program will appear in future newsletters, and a circular will be sent to all Midwest members. In the meantime, interested persons may contact Roy Mackal at the University of Chicago, or Richard Greenwell at the ISC Secretariat in Tucson. Members are reminded that membership meetings are not formal conferences or symposia, but informal reunions at which members can get to meet and exchange views. The meetings are highlighted by illustrated talks on various aspects of cryptozoology. □

"Life is a partial, continuous, progressive, multiform, and conditionally interactive self-realization of the potentialities of atomic electron states."

John Desmond Bernal
The Origin of Life
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London,
1967.

NEWS & NOTES

From Siberia With Love. The rustic bunting (Emberiza rustica) is a Siberian bird which migrates to China and Japan during the winter. It was observed just north of Eureka, California, in January, 1984, reportedly taking ornithologist Ron Levalle away from his televised football game. "Basically," said Levalle, "this bird is on the wrong side of the ocean. The idea of it appearing here has gotten us all excited." It was the first sighting ever in the lower 48 U.S. states.

Another Asian bird, the slaty-backed gull (Larus schistisagus), was also reported in the United States, near St. Louis, and two others, the brambling (Fringilla montifringilla) and the Siberian accentor (Prunella montanella), were sighted on the West Coast earlier in the winter. "We're not sure what's causing all of this, but there have been more 'first' sightings this winter [1983-1984] than anyone can remember," said Richard Erickson, another ornithologist.

Extinct Landing. Macgillivray's petrel (Bulweria macgillivrayi) is a South Pacific bird presumed extinct for 130 years. Even so, naturalist Dick Watling had not given up his year-long search for it in early 1984 when a specimen literally crash-landed on his head. It was previously known from only one specimen, collected in the 1850's between the two main islands of Fiji.

Watling, a Fiji resident, states that he lured the bird to land at night using flashlights. After careful examination, the bird was released, as Watling wants to ensure there is a viable population before trying to collect a second one for science. The discovery, it is thought, may go to Watling's head.

Abominable Snowjob? Vadim Ranov, a Soviet explorer, recently condemned continued interest in, and the search for, the so-called Abominable Snowman, known to natives of the Himalayan mountain range as the Yeti. It is unclear if Ranov, whose statements were carried by the Soviet news agency Tass in April, 1984, was referring specifically to the Yeti or to reports of "wildmen" in the Pamir mountains of the Soviet Union. "Accounts by eyewitnesses are the fruit of their imagination," he stated, adding that alleged Yeti tracks are of normal animals distorted by bright sun rays. Also, he declared, the fact that no bones, shelters, caves, or remains of food have ever been found, rules against its existence. Ranov's conclusion was also based on the fact that "humans have never reverted to a less developed form.... It is impossible to imagine that a group of Neanderthal men suddenly forgot how to make stone tools, necessary for their life, and returned to living in the wild, since this runs counter to the entire course of human evolution."

In actuality, nobody has ever proposed that the Yeti is a relict form of Neanderthal Man, but, rather, a rare and still undiscovered ground ape. (Also, the footprints seen and photographed by explorer Eric Shipton were much more ape-like than human-like.) Some Soviet "wildmen" investigators, however, have advanced the hypothesis that such reports in their own country (including the Pamirs) result from sightings of individuals of a "degenerated" race of surviving Neanderthaloids, but this has nothing to do with the Yeti problem. The Soviet media have usually treated cryptozoological news in a positive light, and it is not clear what the intent of Tass was in this particular case. Comments by Soviet ISC members would be welcome. □

CRYPTOLETTERS

To the Editor:

The stir over Sasquatch in California and Skamania County, Washington (see Newsletter, Summer, 1984), and involving Jon Beckjord, certainly revived decade-old memories, some fond, others not. Those were the days Bob Morgan, Mike Polesnek, and I skulked about Mt. St. Helens, dealing with diverse reports, film crews, the local constabulary, and the disputes among Rene Dahinden, John Green, Peter Byrne, and Beckjord. I'll never forget the latter's "introduction into evidence" of a bent automobile radio antenna at the infamous Sasquatch conference at the University of British Columbia in 1978. Such conduct and resulting controversies, coupled with the eruption of my favorite habitat, forced me to put my khakis into mothballs.

Your article and the reported happenings have piqued my interest to such an extent that I may have to resurrect Bob Morgan from his current duties and head for the Northwest.

W. Ted Ernst, Jr.
Big Pine, Florida, U.S.A.

See the letter from Bob Morgan in the Spring, 1984, Newsletter, and the interview with Rene Dahinden in this issue.--Editor

To the Editor:

I have recently returned from a 2-month trip to South Australia, where, among other things, I was diving with great white sharks. I was therefore intrigued to see (Gerald) Wood's Animal Facts on this animal (Newsletter, Winter, 1984).

It is interesting to note that not one of the "facts" included in this piece is documented. Of course, I do not expect to see the citations in a

newsletter, but all the information given as "fact" has not been documented anywhere else in the literature.

For example, the 26-foot specimen that was supposedly caught in a herring weir in New Brunswick cannot be documented (I have tried to track it down), because the only person who is alive to discuss this event has forgotten almost everything about it.

As for the "estimated 31-footer," without some sort of documentation, it would seem somewhat foolhardy to accept the estimates of California swordfishermen, who did not even bother to photograph this monster, even though they saw it "on several occasions."

I know a little more about the "astonishing" 29.5-footer that was supposedly harpooned in the Azores in 1978. In fact, I went to the Azores in 1982, expressly to track down reports of this monster. I had been in touch with both Gerald Wood and Trevor Housby and, with the exception of a very poor-quality photograph, which contained absolutely no indication of the size of the shark, neither of them could document or verify the extraordinary size of the fish.

I spent the better part of 2 weeks in the Azores, going from island to island, and looking through every day's newspapers from 1974 to 1982. There was no mention of such a shark. I offered a substantial reward for a tooth from this fish, but no tooth was forthcoming. I talked to fishermen, sperm whalers, scientists, newspapermen, and administrators (with the aid of an interpreter, of course).

I found no evidence at all that a white shark (known in Portuguese as tiburao branco) of such a size had ever been seen in the Azores. Of course, in the true spirit of cryptozoology, that does not prove that

such a fish does not exist, but it does suggest that this investigator was unable to document its existence.

I have published complete details of my research in the Azores in the now-defunct GEO (U.S. edition), Vol.5(3), March, 1983.

Richard Ellis
New York, New York, U.S.A.

To the Editor:

Concerning the Nessie flipper photo controversy (see Newsletter, Winter, 1984), I find it sad that so much of the arguing about Loch Ness consists of denigrating the efforts of particular individuals; that fails to get at the nub of the issue. A sorry example is the fuss created by Razdan and Kielar through their comments reported in Discover magazine, and in an article in the Winter, 1984, issue of The Skeptical Inquirer. I leave it to the Academy of Applied Science (AAS) to respond in detail to these misfounded allegations. I should like to make a few comments myself based in part on things I learned during my 1985 stay of 6 weeks at Loch Ness.

First, however, I should like to point out that Razdan and Kielar do not even address some of the strongest evidence for large, unknown animals in Loch Ness, notably the Dinsdale film. Second, I believe it ironic that, in attacking the efforts of AAS, they rely to some extent on personal communications from individuals who are competing with AAS in the search for conclusive evidence. Most of the people they quote do themselves believe that such animals are real--Holly Arnold, Freddie Cary, Tony Harmsworth, Ivor Newby, Dick Raynor, and Adrian Shine.

Third, the manner in which Razdan and Kielar refer to their

acquaintance with local residents may be a little misleading. Most of the people they quote, for example, are local residents for only brief periods of time, or have lived there for not so many years. By contrast, the opinions of long-time residents are rather different--for instance, one of my friends whose family has lived in the area for at least seven generations was astonished and amused by these recent criticisms. He told me that anyone who maintains that the local residents do not believe that there are large and strange things in Loch Ness doesn't know what he is talking about.

Fourth, I regret that Razdan and Kielar, and The Skeptical Inquirer, were more concerned with getting criticisms rapidly into print than they were with their accuracy. Both the authors and The Skeptical Inquirer rejected my offer to provide a critique, before publication of the allegations. Had they accepted my offer, then the article in The Skeptical Inquirer would have contained fewer errors and infelicities.

I would now like also to remark on certain weaknesses in the work done by Razdan and Kielar themselves. They monitored only a very small volume of water, and attempt to defend drawing conclusions from that by noting that this small volume of water is close to areas where Nessies have previously been observed; that, in itself, is not much of an argument, but I should like to go a little further. These hypothetical large animals, moving at great speed in water where visibility is very restricted, might well use some type of sonar themselves; it would seem natural that they would go out of their way to avoid approaching the array constructed by Razdan and Kielar, an array whose shape and dimensions lie outside of their experience. By contrast, if the animals did, on several occasions, come close to the AAS

units, it may have been because those units consisted of a couple of tubes whose dimensions are not so different from those of the salmon which are thought to form part of the regular diet of such animals.

Finally, my information from local sources is that Razdan and Kielar did not monitor continuously, as they claim, from late July into early September, 1983. People who visited their control post in a shed on Temple Pier told me that the apparatus was switched off on certain occasions when the weather became too hot, because the lack of ventilation in the shed brought the temperature higher than desirable for the electronic apparatus being used.

I have decided that I prefer to communicate this to The ISC Newsletter rather than The Skeptical Inquirer, in view of the attitude of the latter journal toward matters concerning Loch Ness.

Henry H. Bauer
Dean, College of Arts
and Sciences
Virginia Polytechnic Institute
and State University
Blacksburg, Virginia, U.S.A.

To the Editor:

Contrary to the innuendoes contained in both the Editor's remarks and the Academy of Applied Science (AAS) response to the Discover article (see Newsletter, Winter, 1984), we are neither thrillseekers nor rank amateurs.

Stated in the clearest possible terms, we are two individuals, just as qualified as any AAS member, interested in scientifically studying the entire field of evidence on the Loch Ness phenomenon, including the AAS findings. Although we respect the professional credentials of Robert Rines, Harold Edgerton, and other AAS members, in no way do we, nor should any

other objective observer, assume that their professional reputations imply infallibility or unassailable findings. It is their data, methodology, and reporting which we find wanting, and we have always stressed this in our previous reports on this matter.

Unlike with AAS, our attack is not on personalities, and our aim was to study, not to slander. We think that AAS's continuing efforts to discredit us personally, as well as their reliance on credentials, rather than on scientific facts, is an insult both to us and to the scientific community as a whole. Unlike the AAS, we welcome any new information on the Loch Ness matter. Our findings raise serious questions about the validity of Academy members' research at Loch Ness, and, thus far, they have not satisfactorily rebutted our points with any hard facts.

During our 4.5-month stay at Loch Ness in 1983, we uncovered background material that contrasted with previously published accounts of sonar and photographic searches for the Loch Ness Monster. This material is detailed in our article in the Winter, 1984, issue of The Skeptical Inquirer.

By October, 1983, before we returned from Scotland, it was apparent that discrepancies in the methodology of AAS in their August, 1972, "flipper" sonar-photographic contact invalidated their sonar data as evidence for a large, moving, aquatic animal. We were curious to see if the photographic evidence suffered from similar misrepresentations. Our subsequent findings, and the Academy's responses, indicate that information vital to a complete assessment of the AAS evidence for a Loch Ness Monster had been withheld.

We would now like to respond to the Academy's statement (including Wyckoff's letter) that appeared in the Winter, 1984,

issue of The ISC Newsletter. Foremost, although Wyckoff's letter begins with an outright denial of any Academy "retouching" or "change" of any Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) computer-enhanced photograph, in the body of his letter he attempts to justify and to explain how the JPL computer-enhanced photographs were subjectively altered.

Wyckoff now admits that the 1972 "flipper" photos were subjected to two different methods of enhancement, beyond Gillespie's objective computer techniques. Both methods mentioned by Wyckoff require subjective judgments on the part of the enhancer to elicit the flipper-like images subsequently published by the AAS. The use of subjective image manipulation techniques presupposes a knowledge of the image content. In this case, no a priori knowledge of the photographic content was possible. Therefore, the results of these subjective techniques are purely speculative, and yield data that are scientifically unacceptable.

The "spectacular corroboration of independent sonar and photographic detection" to which Wyckoff refers, is not borne out by either analysis of the corresponding sonar record or the methodology employed by the Academy researchers, as described in our Skeptical Inquirer article. Also, Wyckoff now attempts to distance himself and the Academy from the upper sepia picture printed in Discover. Strangely enough, a black-and-white version of the sepia photograph or one indistinguishable from it appears in a 1982 AAS Report to the Membership in an article by Rines, edited by Curtis, and clearly labeled: "computer enhanced at Jet Propulsion Laboratories [sic], California."

As to the original, unenhanced photographs in the March-April, 1976, Technology Review article by Rines, Edgerton,

Wyckoff, and Klein, they state "the [original, unenhanced] photographs obtained that night appear to be quite vague" (p. 30).

Wyckoff's claim that Alan Gillespie had warned us that "the whole issue of enhancements is here something of a 'red herring'" is a complete fabrication. In November, 1983, Alan Gillespie welcomed our efforts to set the record straight regarding the misrepresentation by the Academy of his 1972 "flipper" computer enhancements. In fact, Dr. Gillespie told us that he had made an earlier, unsuccessful attempt to bring attention to these distortions. Dr. Gillespie sent us several different enhancements of each of the three 1972 Academy photos. The other JPL enhancements are just as ambiguous as the one published in Discover and The Skeptical Inquirer, if not more so.

The Academy makes much of its "invitation" to us to review the original Academy films, etc. Perhaps the circumstances under which this "invitation" was extended should now be addressed. On August 8, 1984, after the publication of the Discover article, Rines telephoned us at our laboratory in Rochester, New York. When we asked him to clarify the discrepancies between the explanations he was then proposing and his published accounts, he went so far as to deny responsibility for publications of which he is a principal author. Under these circumstances, we realized little could be accomplished at an Academy meeting, and felt it more appropriate to present our findings in a public forum.

Ironically, Wyckoff claims that we must have failed to unearth the February, 1978, IEEE Spectrum article he co-authored with Edgerton. In fact, it was this article that first aroused our suspicions about the validity of the Academy's "research" at Loch Ness.

In this article, Edgerton and Wyckoff clearly state "there are no water currents in Loch Ness." This assumption is fundamental to their interpretation of their June 19-20, 1975, data. During calibration of tests of our tracking sonar array, in the same area of the loch, we observed strong underwater currents. In addition, it is impossible to obtain meaningful target size information from the sonar charts in the IEEE Spectrum article. Edgerton and Wyckoff, erroneously, equated the width of their observed sonar targets with the actual trace thickness on their sonar chart recorder.

Although there are many more examples illustrating Academy members' questionable methodology, and their attempts to abdicate responsibility for acclaim gone sour, we do not believe it serves any useful purpose to keep rehashing this material. If any large, aquatic creatures do exist in Loch Ness--which neither we nor anyone else has yet conclusively determined--it will only be discovered through incontrovertible data, not through a war of words and character assassination.

We are not "frustrated and disappointed" about our inability to detect a Loch Ness Monster. However, we are certainly "frustrated and disappointed" over the sad inability of the AAS to contribute worthwhile findings to the current bank of data on the subject. We will continue to condemn their ongoing efforts to give their flawed material credence.

Rikki Razdan
Alan Kielar
ISCAN, Inc.
Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

Robert Rines was sent an advance copy of the above letter, should he or other Academy members wish to respond. See coverage of Razdan and Kielar's Skeptical Inquirer article elsewhere in this issue.--Editor

WOOD'S ANIMAL FACTS

The greatest wingspread attained by any living bird is that of the wandering albatross of the southern oceans, which has more wing feathers (88) than any other species. In one short series of birds examined by Tickell (1968) on Bird Island, South Georgia, adult males averaged 10 feet, 1.75 inches (3.09 meters), which wings tightly stretched, and adult females 10 feet, 2.25 inches (3.11 meters), but females are normally smaller than males.

In an earlier study during June-August, 1959, at Malabar (Sydney) and Bellambi, New South Wales, Australia, the average wingspread of the 119 birds netted while on the water was found to be 9 feet, 10 inches (3 meters), with a maximum of 10 feet, 7.25 inches (3.23 meters),

and a minimum of 8 feet, 11 inches (2.72 meters).

The largest accurately measured specimen on record was an 11-foot, 11-inch (3.63-meter) male caught in the Tasman Sea on September 18, 1965, by the Antarctic research ship USNS Eltanin. The bird was measured by Dr. Peter C. Harper, an ornithologist at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, after it became ensnared in some oceanographic gear trailing behind the vessel.... Another taken by banders in Western Australia in c. 1957 measured 11 feet, 10 inches (3.6 meters), and a third male found stranded on the beach at Bunbury, 110 miles (177 kilometers) south of Fremantle, Western Australia, on July 17, 1930, had a span of 11 feet, 6

inches (3.5 meters).

...The law of averages says this dynamic soarer must reach and sometimes exceed 12 feet (3.7 meters), and this is confirmed by several 19th century naturalists.... Lord Campbell (1877) claims he measured several birds of 12-13 feet (3.7-4 meters) at islands in the Indian Ocean during the cruise of the Challenger.... Dr. George Bennett (1860), who was a very competent observer, measured several albatrosses ranging from 10 feet, 4 inches (3.15 meters) to 11 feet, 8 inches (3.56 meters), but also mentioned another specimen in which the spread of wings reached 14 feet (4.3 meters).

Abstracted from:
The Guinness Book of Animal Facts and Feats, by Gerald L. Wood, Guinness Superlatives, Enfield, U.K. (3rd ed.), 1982.

Honorary Members: Andre Capart (Belgium); Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer (South Africa); David James (United Kingdom); Marie-Jeanne Koffmann (Soviet Union); Ingo Krumbiegel (Federal German Republic); Theodore Monod (France); John R. Napier (United Kingdom); Sir Peter Scott (United Kingdom).

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